

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /031 R

DRAFTED BY AF/N:DLMACK:YSM

APPROVED BY AF:DBEASUM

AF/N:GMLANE

S/S - WHLUERS

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TO AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY

S E C R E T STATE 053714

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TS, US, XF

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH CHATTI

1. IN MEETING WITH SECRETARY ON MARCH 16, FOREIGN MINISTER CHATTI PRESENTED TUNISIAN VIEWS ON MIDDLE EAST AND SOUGHT SECRETARY'S EXPLANATION OF CURRENT STATUS OF SETTLEMENT NEGOTIATION. CHATTI SAID THAT EGYPTIANS HAVE CONFIDENCE IN SECRETARY AND THAT BOTH PRESIDENT ASAD AND PLO/FATAH ARE READY FOR DISCUSSIONS. CHATTI SAID THAT TUNISIA IS PREPARED PLAY USEFUL ROLE AND HAS GOOD CONTACTS AMONG PALESTINIAN LEADERS. SECRETARY SAID THAT NEXT STEP IS DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN SYRIA AND ISRAEL. IT IS PREREQUISITE FOR CONSIDERATION OF PROBLEMS RELATED TO JORDAN AND PALESTINIANS. USG RECOGNIZES THAT THERE CAN BE NO SOLUTION TO OVERALL MIDDLE EAST DISPUTE WHICH DOES NOT INCLUDE PALESTINIANS, BUT IT IS DIFFICULT TO TELL WHO ACTUALLY REPRESENTS THEM. IT IS IN PALESTINIAN INTEREST THAT CURRENT NEGOTIATION WITH SYRIA SUCCEED.

2. BOURGUIBA VISIT: SECRETARY PROPOSED MAY 30 AS DATE FOR SECRET

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MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENTS NIXON AND BOURGUIBA BUT WARNED

OF SLIGHT CHANCE THAT DATE WOULD HAVE TO BE POSTPONED BY ONE WEEK. CHATTI REPLIED THAT SINCE BOURGUIBA WOULD HAVE TO BE IN TUNIS FOR TUNISIAN NATIONAL DAY ON JUNE 1, A DATE IN JUNE MIGHT BE BETTER. SECRETARY SAID WE WOULD

LOOK INTO MATTER.

3. PLEASE CONFIRM THAT CHATTI, AFTER CONTACTING BOURGUIBA ON HIS RETURN, STILL BELIEVES THAT WEEK OF JUNE 3-7 WOULD FIT WITH BOURGUIBA'S OWN SCHEDULE. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, MINISTERIAL VISITS, PEACE PLANS, INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION, MUTUAL FORCE WITHDRAWALS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE053714
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: DLMACK:YSM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740334/aaaabgiw.tel
Line Count: 71
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <26 AUG 2002 by rowelle0>; APPROVED <06 JAN 2003 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SECRETARY'S MEETING WITH CHATTI
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, TS, US, XF, (BOURGUIBA, HABIB), (CHATTI, HABIB)
To: TUNIS
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005